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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 18, 2006

#### In Today's Papers

The US - Organization of Islamic Conference to Cooperate  
Zaman reports that Undersecretary Nicholas Burns said in a letter to the Turkish Secretary-General of the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC), Ekmeleddin Ihsanoglu, that the US wanted cooperation and dialogue with the OIC. Burns met Ihsanoglu on the sidelines of the UN General Assembly meetings in New York, and expressed an interest in launching joint projects with the prestigious Muslim organization. Ihsanoglu said a first such joint project could be a conference on rising 'Islamophobia' organized by the OIC and to be held at Georgetown University in 2007. Burns promised he would look into the project, according to Zaman. In the letter he later sent to Ihsanoglu, Burns also mentioned 'cultural exchange' programs for Muslim academics to visit the US for consultations.

#### Erdogan Faints, Rushed to Hospital

All papers report Prime Minister Tayyip Erdogan was rushed to hospital on Tuesday after fainting possibly due to his keeping the Muslim fast during Ramadan. Doctors said Erdogan's blood sugar level fell because of his fasting and extreme exhaustion. Erdogan has had a busy schedule in the past few weeks, visiting the United States, Britain and Saudi Arabia. Erdogan was released after spending nine hours in the hospital.

All papers report that while Erdogan lay unconscious in the back seat, his driver panicked and accidentally activated the car's automatic locking mechanism. The doors closed, trapping Erdogan inside for eight minutes. His guards eventually took him into the hospital after breaking the armored glass with a sledgehammer. Papers strongly criticize the 'awkwardness and unprofessional conduct' of the PM's guards, saying it was a 'security scandal.'

#### EU-Turkey

Hurriyet, Milliyet, Sabah, Radikal, Cumhuriyet, Zaman and others report Foreign Minister Abdullah Gul, after returning from the EU

Troika meetings in Luxembourg, said that the mood of the talks was different from that of previous ones. Gul said Turkey would watch the implementation of the controversial Article 301, and would make amendments if necessary. Cumhuriyet expects the EU to release a tough message at its December meetings if Turkey fails to take forward steps on allowing Greek Cypriot traffic into Turkish ports and airports. The paper quotes unidentified sources who predict that the negotiations with Ankara might be suspended. Meanwhile, EU Commission Turkey representative Hansjorg Kretschmer said 'There will be no train crash in Turkey's EU membership process,' noting he was confident a compromise will be reached concerning Cyprus. Kretschmer also said the French adoption of an Armenian 'genocide' bill should not be used as a pretext to legitimize Article 301 restricting free speech. Kretschmer also underlined that the position of the civilian authority vis-à-vis the military was one of the most difficult issues Turkey has to resolve.

Bush Opposes a Divided Iraq, Hosts 'Iftar' Dinner  
Milliyet, Sabah, Radikal, Cumhuriyet, Zaman, Yeni Safak and others report President Bush told Fox News that he would reject any disintegration of Iraq along ethnic and sectarian lines. 'The Kurds will then create problems for Turkey and you have got a bigger mess than we have at this point,' Bush said. Papers also report the Iraqi Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki expressed opposition to dividing the country.

Several papers report President Bush hosted, for the sixth time, an Iftar dinner at the White House for the diplomatic representatives of Islamic countries and the leaders of the Muslim community in the United States. Secretary Rice also took part. The majority of the terror victims around the world have been Muslims, said the President at the Iftar.

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Zabari Suggests 'Dialogue' to Solve the PKK Problem  
Cumhuriyet reports the Iraqi Foreign Minister Hoshiyar Zabari told the northern Iraqi daily Nwe that under existing conditions, it was not possible for the US or Iraqi forces to fight against the PKK, since such a move would require a relocation of security forces from south and central Iraq to the north of the country. 'Our priority now is to end the ongoing violence in Iraq,' said Zabari, stressing that dialogue was preferred instead of military action to resolve the PKK problem. Zabari also noted that the Mahmur camp in northern Iraq would not be closed, and that 'not a single' asylum seeker would be extradited, unless they want to go back.

Editorial Commentary on North Korea

Columnist Zafer Atay thinks that the North Korean regime will be very careless about international sanctions. He wrote in the economic-politic Dunya: "The unleashing of North Korea's nuclear program through the recent nuclear test once again brings to light some peculiarities about this country. This very poor country is ruled by Kim Jong-Il, who calls himself 'Marshall' even though he never served in the army. North Korea maintains diplomatic relations with a very limited number of countries, and North Korean diplomats serving abroad are usually subject to deportation because of their involvement in drug and arms trafficking. The recent nuclear test by North Korea drew angry responses from all over the world, including China and Russia -- Iran was the only exception. Iran hopes that if North Korea gets away with its nuclear program, this will benefit Tehran's desire to maintain its own nuclear weapons program. The fact of the matter is that international sanctions, including an embargo, cannot deter the North Korean regime. The Kim Jong-Il regime does not even care about feeding its own people. Therefore they think that nothing can harm them as long as the North Korean army remains powerful. And military action against North Korea will not be an easy thing to do either, because the country possesses intercontinental ballistic missiles."

TV Highlights  
NTV (7 A.M.)

Domestic News

- Istanbul Chamber of Industry (ISO) warned that a Turkish boycott of French products would not be helpful in the short term, and would lead to troubles in the long term.

- The mayor of the mainly Kurdish city of Diyarbakir, Osman Baydemir, attended a conference on 'EU and the Kurds' in the European Parliament, calling on Ankara to share its authority with local administrations.

- Two suspects throwing eggs at Prime Minister Erdogan during a visit to Mersin have been given 14.5 months in prison, and seven others have been given eleven-month prison sentences.

- An Istanbul court kicked off the first hearing of Noam Chomsky's Turkish publishers, charged under Article 301 for 'insulting the Turkish identity and the Republic' in the Turkish translation of 'The Manufacture of Consent' written by Chomsky and Edward S. Herman. The prosecutor asked for prison sentences of up to six years for the publisher and translators. Defense counsel said the publisher and translators cannot be held responsible for the views of the authors.

- An OECD report urges Turkey to reduce the minimum wage, increase retirement age to 65, and cancel the payment of retirement compensations.

- US Citigroup Inc. has agreed to buy 20 percent of Turkey's Sabanci

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family-owned Akbank for USD 3.1 billion, in a deal seen as a 'strategic partnership.'

International News

- The British Independent described Turkey as 'a prize slipping away' for the EU.

- EU Commission President Jose Manuel Barroso's spokesman said the view of Barroso that Turkey cannot be expected to become a member in less than 15 to 20 years was not new.

- About 500 Sunni Arab tribal representatives said at a meeting in Kirkuk they were committed to the unity of Iraq, demanding the immediate release of Saddam Hussein.

- President Bush has signed controversial legislation authorizing tough interrogation of terror suspects and opening the way for trials before military commissions, calling it a vital tool in the war on terror.

- Italian Prime Minister Romano Prodi said Muslim immigrant women should not be totally 'hidden' behind veils if they want to integrate and become part of Italy's future.

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